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Security Council

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Letter dated 25 July 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached letter dated 24 July 2017 on humanitarian access in the Syrian Arab Republic from the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, Julian Braithwaite (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**

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Annex to the letter dated 25 July 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We, representatives of some of the permanent missions in Geneva that attend weekly meetings of the Task Force on Humanitarian Access, recall the relevant resolutions of the Security Council concerning humanitarian access in the Syrian Arab Republic, namely resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015), 2268 (2016) and 2332 (2016). We are writing to raise a number of serious concerns about the implementation of those resolutions.

We remain extremely concerned that the United Nations is being excluded from sending humanitarian convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach areas inside Syria. The trend has worsened significantly in recent months. According to the United Nations, only two United Nations-supported convoys have been able to gain access to territory besieged by the Syrian authorities since April 2017.

We are very concerned at the continued lack of cross-line humanitarian deliveries, protection of civilians, medical access and freedom of movement in those areas. In its resolution 2139 (2014), the Council clearly articulated its unanimous demands concerning not only humanitarian access, but also the requirement that all parties comply with international humanitarian law. Medical and other aid is urgently needed by the population. We must also see the Syrian authorities fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We urge the Council to underline to States Members of the United Nations, in particular the Syrian authorities: (a) the protections enjoyed by civilians and medical missions under international humanitarian law; and (b) the need for the United Nations to determine the planning, delivery and monitoring of cross-line humanitarian assistance. We hope the Council will help secure unimpeded United Nations humanitarian access to all areas of the Syrian Arab Republic.

We hope you will be able to raise urgently this vital issue at the next Council meeting and that the Council will take action pursuant to resolution 2139 (2014), given the stated intent of the Council to "take further steps in the case of non-compliance" with that resolution.

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